

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, PARM, GW, SF
SUBJECT: FRG-SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR COOPERATION

1. DECEMBER 26 ISSUE DER SPIEGEL REPORTS ON ALLEGED
GERMAN ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM.
ARTICLE REPEATS EARLIER ALLEGATIONS OF GERMAN ASSISTANCE
IN ISOTOPE SEPARATION TECHNOLOGY.

2. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY TRANSLATION OF THE DER
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SPIEGEL ARTICLE:

IN INITIAL REPORTS 'DER SPIEGEL' MENTIONED STRONG
EVIDENCE THAT SOUTH AFRICAN ENRICHMENT TECHNOLOGY WAS
DERIVED FROM BECKER PROCESS DEVELOPED AT KARLSRUHE
NUCLEAR RESEARCH CENTER. ACCORDING TO CURRENT ARTICLE,
ALL SPECIAL EQUIPMENT FOR SOUTH AFRICAN PILOT ENRICH-

MENT PLANT HAD BEEN OBTAINED FROM GERMAN FIRMS. ARTICLE GOES ON TO EXPLAIN THAT SUCH SENSITIVE COMPONENTS WERE ALL ON THE SO-CALLED TRIGGER LIST AND THEREFORE THEIR EXPORT REQUIRED FORMAL LICENSING BY THE FEDERAL AUTHORITIES. THE REPORT SUGGESTS, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS CIRCUMVENTED SUCH OBSTACLES: INITIALLY THE GERMAN FIRM GHH-STERKRADE REQUESTED LICENSE TO DELIVER A TURBO CONDENSER FOR THE PROJECTED ENRICHMENT PLANT AT PELINDABA, SOUTH AFRICA; WHEN THIS APPLICATION WAS DENIED, GHH SIMPLY REPHRASED THE DESTINATION OF THE CONDENSER TO "COAL FIRED POWER PLANT MATLA", WHICH, OF COURSE, REQUIRED NO OFFICIAL LICENSE. DER SPIEGEL REPORTS THAT IN THIS WAY THE SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM IS ABLE TO OBTAIN ANY EQUIPMENT THEY NEED. THE MOST RECENT INDICATION OF THIS IS THE ALLEGED ORDER OF A "PERFORATION" MACHINE FROM THE STEIGERWALD STRAHLTECHNIK GMBH, MUNICH, WHOSE MAJOR SHAREHOLDER IS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. SUCH EQUIPMENT, WHOSE DEVELOPMENT WAS FUNDED BY THE FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR DEFENSE, IS SUITABLE FOR SEPARATING PLUTONIUM FROM FISSION PRODUCTS. IN A PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY STATE SECRETARY GRUENER OF THE FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR ECONOMICS CONFIRMED SUCH AN ORDER, BUT EXPLAINED THAT ITS APPLICATION WAS THE EXTRACTION OF METALS OF THE PLATINUM GROUP AND OF GOLD. DER SPIEGEL CLAIMS, HOWEVER, THAT THE CUSTOMER, SOUTH AFRICAN HYDRAULIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PLANT, EDENVALE 1610, 32 PLANTATION ROAD, WAS A FRONT COMPANY. IN A CLOSING PARAGRAPH THE REPORT QUOTES A STEIGERWALD SPOKESMAN AS SAYING THAT "THIS DEAL HAS BEEN ARRANGED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR AGENCY WHICH HAS BEEN A CUSTOMER OF OURS FOR OVER EIGHT YEARS."

3. FRG SOURCES QUESTIONED ABOUT DER SPIEGEL ARTICLE (ROUGET-FOREIGN MINISTRY, POPP-BMFT) ASSURED EMBASSY SCICOUNSELOR THAT FRG WAS GIVING NO SUCH ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH AFRICA. THEY NOTED THAT THE BECKER PROCESS IS UNCLASSIFIED AND THE S.A. ENRICHMENT PLANT PROBABLY USES SOME OF BECKER'S CONCEPTS BUT THE GERMANS DO NOT KNOW DETAILS OF S.A. ENRICHMENT PROCESS. AS TO "PERFORATION" MACHINE, THEY ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY SUCH DEVICE HAVING APPLICABILITY IN EITHER CHEMICAL PROCESSING OF NUCLEAR FUEL OR FOR ISOTOPE SEPARATION AND SO ADVISED FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER WHO HAD ASKED FOR A STAFF REPORT ON THE ARTICLE. STOESEL

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